

Higher recognition for learning developers: NTF and PFHEA discussion session

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Presentation abstract

Although it might sometimes seem as though PFHEA and NTF are high-level and strategic forms of recognition for those working in high-level and strategic positions, this is not necessarily the case, and both have been achieved by an ever-increasing number of Learning Developers. Join us in this session if either of these is something you've been mulling over or a goal you've set yourself, and we will outline what's involved in writing an application, share with you the kinds of evidence we used in our own applications, explore how you can meet the requirements, and hopefully answer your questions about how you might proceed. Aim high!

Keywords: recognition; professional development; progression.

Community response

There has been a marked growth in university professional service and academic-related contracts. Many of these contracts lie within the third space, sitting on the perimeter between the academic and the professional (Whitchurch, 2008). Such roles work in new spaces, developing new applied forms of knowledge within the context of complicated institutional relationships (Whitchurch, 2015). Such roles are often vying for legitimacy, and Learning Development is often fully situated both within this debate and the third space (Webster, 2022). There is a longstanding acknowledgement that staff working within higher education's third space are under-represented in professional recognition schemes (McIntosh and Nutt, 2022), and it is amazing to see that Carina and Debbie, as members

of our Learning Development community, are valiantly fighting to change this landscape and see the recognition of more professionals within sector bodies like Advanced HE.

It was particularly nice to see acknowledgement of their work from a previous ALDinHE Conference, with one member of the community thanking them for their inspiration:

I wanted to share that I attended a version of this session in Northampton, and it inspired me into action. I wrote my NTF Claim over Christmas that year, and I've begun to work through PFHEA. I hope anyone attending this year is equally inspired - and I wish us all luck with the forms and competitions ahead!

This is a demonstration of the impact of Carina and Debbie as changemakers in both Learning Development and higher education more broadly.

Editorial comment

Members of the Learning Development community may be interested in Advance HE's (2023) [NTFS Allyship Scheme](#), designed to 'help to increase the representation, progression, and success of individuals identified as being from an under-represented group(s) in the NTFS'.

Authors' reflection

CB: This is great to hear! Good luck to everyone currently working on these forms of recognition. It's difficult, sometimes, writing in the way that is required and having to put yourself forward ahead of colleagues, but thinking of it as an opportunity to reflect on all you have achieved – and the ongoing life of those achievements – does make it easier. I know, too, that some people think of these applications as 'jumping through hoops' or 'playing the game'. The thing is, we're part of the game, whether we like it or not, and these hoops are important for getting noticed and standing out, if that is relevant to your career journey. So the best way to approach it is to do so with integrity, by tracing the line of your impact, celebrating your successes, marvelling at how far your actions have reached, and blushing furiously as more people than you would even dare guess

contribute lovely statements about what your work and ideas have meant to them. Why would you not?!

DH: I agree with Carina – these awards can be viewed as a personal achievement, but for me, each Learning Developer that steps out of their comfort zone and participates is a role model. We know from the AdvanceHE statistics that LD and those of professional service contracts are under-represented, and the LD community make an enormous contribution to student success and engagement – as well as leading, supporting and sometimes coaching the academics who work with us to enhance that student experience in so many ways! It has been an amazing personal journey for me to be part of that LD community, where I always find inspiration, practical help and ideas to disrupt and replace ‘death by powerpoint’ with creativity, fun and exploration. And see the joy of learning reflected in the faces of those in the classroom with me, be it online or face-to-face. It is a privilege to mentor and coach and give something back.

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Carina Buckley is currently Instructional Design Manager at Solent University and a Principal Fellow of AdvanceHE. She is a strategic leader, committed to advancing the principles of emancipatory practice and partnership working, between staff and students and between colleagues. An active advocate for LD institutionally, regionally, nationally and internationally, Carina has held posts as Co-Chair and Treasurer for the Association for Learning Development in HE (ALDinHE) and is a prolific author, editor and collaborator.

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